



DIVERSITY@Work

A PUBLICATION OF THE OFFICE OF DIVERSITY MANAGEMENT & EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY,
A PROGRAM OFFICE WITHIN VA'S OFFICE OF HUMAN RESOURCES & ADMINISTRATION

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<<http://www.va.gov/dmeeo/ca/daw.htm>>

MAY/JUNE 2005

Q&A: THE VA LEARNING UNIVERSITY (VALU)

In this issue we talk with Joy Hunter, Dean of VALU and Co-chair of the Veterans Health Administration's Diversity Advisory Board. Look for the rest of her interview on the July 2005 episode of Diversity News, airing on the VA Knowledge Network's Communications Channel.

Q: What is VALU?

Ms. Hunter: The VA Learning University, VALU as we like to say, is a university without walls. It's really a virtual collaboration among all the various entities within the Department of Veterans Affairs. Our mutual goal across all three Administrations and the staff offices is to create a One-VA employee culture of learning, and we do that through partnership and collaboration. But VALU even goes beyond the partnership of all those education entities in VA and extends that partnership to other Government agencies, colleges, universities, and other Federal partners; so we're really just an ambassador of learning, so to speak. But our biggest challenge and opportunity, I think, is leveraging the best in terms of resources, skills, and talents in the learning arena

CELEBRATE!

Asian Pacific American Heritage Month

VA proudly joined the Nation in celebrating National Asian Pacific American (APA) Heritage Month in May. This year's theme was "Liberty and Freedom for All."

In June 1977, a House resolution was introduced that called upon the President to proclaim the first 10 days of May as Asian Pacific American Heritage Week. Later, President Jimmy Carter signed a joint resolution declaring May 4-10, 1979, as the first Asian Pacific American Heritage Week. In 1990, President George H. W. Bush expanded the celebration to the entire month. Public Law 102-450, approved in 1992, designated May of each year as National Asian Pacific American Heritage Month. This month was chosen for the observance to commemorate the arrival of

throughout the Department to all employees.

Q: What are your priorities for VALU?

Ms. Hunter: Our priorities include developing leaders at all levels, from the moment of employee orientation to offering employees opportunities throughout their careers to learn and grow. VA has recently adopted the High-Performance Development Model, a framework that gives all employees an understanding of what the expectations are about their current competencies and skill sets and what they need to learn for professional and personal growth and development. We also want to look at the development of our senior leadership, not only just attaining higher leadership levels in the organization, but also working to ensure that there is ongoing development for those senior leaders. I am now in the process of establishing the VA Senior Leadership Academy that will provide a customized curriculum each year based on the VA strategic plan, emerging needs, and feedback from senior leaders.
(Continued on page 3.)

the first Japanese immigrants to the United States in May of 1843. APA Heritage Month, however, celebrates the accomplishments of a community that represents many diverse backgrounds, histories, languages, and cultures.

Overall, employment of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (AAPI) at VA reached 5.82 percent in fiscal year 2004. AAPI employment increased in all major VA occupational categories, including professional, administrative, technical, clerical, and supervisory positions. Employment of AAPIs with disabilities and AAPI disabled veterans rose to 547 and 252, respectively. For more information, contact Peter Yoon at (202) 501-2031 or at peter.yoon@va.gov. ■

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BOOKMARKS

- ▶ **Arab American National Museum**
www.theaanm.org
- ▶ **Blacks in Government (BIG)**
www.bignet.org
- ▶ **Disability Info.gov**
www.disabilityinfo.gov
- ▶ **MANA, A National Latina Organization**
www.hermana.org
- ▶ **Ms. Foundation for Women**
www.daughtersandsonstowork.org
- ▶ **National Federation of Filipino American Associations (NaFFAA)**
www.naffaa.org
- ▶ **Washington Internships for Native Students (WINS)**
www.american.edu/wins
- ▶ **White House Initiative on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders**
www.aapi.gov

FIELD NOTES

News You Can Use

TWC Awards

The Washington Center for Internships and Academic Seminars (TWC) held its Annual Academic Affairs Awards ceremony at the National Press Club on April 5, 2005. The ceremony recognized individuals from Federal government, private sector, colleges, and universities for their outstanding contributions in the development of students through internship opportunities. Brenda A. Martin, National Internship Program Coordinator, was recognized with a plaque and bouquet of flowers for exemplary placements of college students with disabilities during the fall 2004 session. VA sponsored six interns and also retained one at the VA Regional Office, Washington, DC. Congratulations, Ms. Martin! For more information on TWC, visit www.twc.edu.

VA's 2005 National Internship Summer Program

The Department's National Internship Summer Program welcome is scheduled for June 6, 2005. R. Allen Pittman, Assistant Secretary for Human Resources and Administration, has been invited as the keynote speaker. The interns are affiliated with organizations such as American University's Washington Internships for Native Students, the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities, the National Association for Equal Opportunity in Higher Education, and The Washington Center for Internships and Academic Seminars. The Asian American Pacific Islander (AAPI) interns, sponsored through the White House Initiative Office, have been funded by an external organization, International Leadership Foundation, to encourage AAPI entrance into Federal Government. For more information on VA's internship programs, contact Brenda A. Martin, National Internship Program Coordinator, at Brenda.Martin@va.gov.

FAPAC Leadership Training Conference

In conjunction with the observance of Asian Pacific

American Heritage Month, the Federal Asian Pacific American Council (FAPAC) will be hosting its 20th Annual National Leadership Training Conference and Congressional Seminar from May 31 to June 3, 2005, at the Marriott Crystal Gateway Hotel in Arlington, Virginia. The conference qualifies under the Government Employees Training Act and is in compliance with 5 U.S.C. Chapter 41. VA will display the Asian American and Pacific Islander Veterans' Medal of Honor Exhibit at the conference. R. Allen Pittman, Assistant Secretary for Human Resources and Administration, will provide the closing remarks at the conference's scholarship awards presentation luncheon on June 1, 2005. For more conference information, visit www.fapac.org/confinfo/index.htm.

MD-715 Update

VA has been the Federal leader in automating workforce data tables and program plans required by the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission's Management Directive 715 (MD-715). VA has automated the required data tables, which are available on VA's intranet at the VISN Support Service Center (<http://vssc.med.va.gov>). Currently, the new reports providing regional and local relevant civilian labor force comparisons are ready for testing at http://vssc.med.va.gov/hr/rcif_newtesting.asp. The report allows users to pinpoint occupations which may have a barrier to full participation, triggering an in-depth review of policies and recruitment. For further assistance in conducting workforce analysis compliant with MD-715 or for a demonstration of VSSC, contact Mike Dole, Director, Workforce Analysis and Evaluation, at (202) 501-1975.

Diversity News Back on the Air!

Look for the June 2005 episode of DM&EEO's monthly news program, *Diversity News*, on the VA Knowledge Network's Communications Channel.■

WEB SITE SPOTLIGHT

NTAC-AAPI

<http://www.ntac.hawaii.edu>

Content: The mission of the National Technical Assistance Center for Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders with Disabilities (NTAC-AAPI) is to develop a center that will increase employment opportunities for AAPIs with disabilities nationwide, in both rural and urban areas; to develop and provide technical assistance that will result in increased, culturally relevant vocational rehabilitation services for AAPIs with disabilities; and to respond to the changing needs for technical assistance by the population being served.

Must-See Feature: e.News, which is distributed semi-monthly to centers for independent living; vocational rehabilitation systems; community, cultural, business, and employer/industry organizations; and university, AAPI, and other professional members.

Contact Info: 1776 University Avenue
Honolulu, HI 96822

Accessibility: This site is Bobby Approved Section 508.■

DIVERSITY MANAGEMENT

VHA & TCUs (Article by DM&EEO WINS Intern Heather Busey)

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) takes action to provide services not only to veterans, but to students in the education system as well. The facilities managed by the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) nationwide offer students attending Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCUs) an opportunity to gain clinical and non-clinical training and education at a VA hospital or medical facility.

According to the 2003 report on the White House Initiative on TCUs, VA's education and training budget provided stipends for direct and indirect costs to over 83,000 students, interns, and residents who received all or part of their clinical training at a VA health care facility. For example, Oglala Sioux Community College acquired funding for nine students to receive their clinical training at the Black Hills Health Care System, a VHA facility in South Dakota. In 2004, VHA increased that number to 10 students from Oglala Sioux Community College.

VHA's Management Support Office Equal Employment Opportunity/Affirmative Employment Team assists field facilities in establishing relationships with TCUs. In addition to the Management Support Office, internships have been made available through two Washington internship programs—American University's Washington Internships for Native Students (WINS) and The Washington Center for Internships and Academic Seminars—as well as through collaborative efforts with field facilities and VA Central Office.

Most of the time, field facilities initiate contact with the TCU in order to offer their facilities for training; however, TCUs have also contacted VA facilities to explore such options. These contacts give medical centers the ability to obtain the resumes of potential interns.

In addition to providing internships, VHA's Health Care Staff Development and Retention Office attends various recruitment forums targeted at minority students. The office also networks with colleges and universities to attract Native American graduates. This outreach is an important part to maintaining diversity in their facilities.

When possible, field facilities try to hire their student interns for permanent positions. Many of the nursing students from Oglala Sioux Community College, for instance, have been hired after completion of their internship at the Black Hills Health Care System. VHA facilities consider all majors in the medical field and other fields of study; however, students are usually selected based on the organization's needs.

Currently there are 14 TCUs with a VHA facility in a 75-mile radius of their college or university. There is great potential for such internship programs, which can benefit both the students attending TCUs and VA as it aims to recruit a workforce that reflects the diverse face of the Nation and the veterans that VA serves. For more information, contact Brenda Martin, National Internship Coordinator, at Brenda.Martin@va.gov. ■

Q&A: VALU (CONTINUED)

Joy Hunter, Dean of VALU

The Academy will be launched in fiscal year 2006. VALU is simultaneously focusing on developing the front-line supervisor. The most often cited reason an employee chooses to leave an organization is because of the supervisor. We're making a big investment to ensure that we have a well-trained supervisory workforce throughout the Department. We're developing a Department-wide curriculum for local facilities to use plus piloting e-learning opportunities for interactive distance learning to help develop that strong cadre of supervisors. The other thing that we're working on that goes hand-in-hand with supervisory development is focusing on developing a strong cadre of HR professionals. What we see in terms of employee satisfaction, as far as employee opportunities for continued growth and development, is that it is supervisors supported by

an HR professional that really make the difference. So in the next couple of years, we will be putting a lot of emphasis and a lot of focus on developing the career opportunities to nurture those two employee groups. The other thing that we're working on, and I think it's often underestimated, is that employee learning becomes, in and of itself, a recruitment and retention tool—especially when an organization as large as VA develops a reputation for supporting continuous employee growth and development. I think we're also reaching out through VALU to communicate to the larger Federal community plus colleges and universities that we are a great place to grow and learn and that you can have lots of opportunities for development throughout your VA career. [Visit the VALU Web site at vaww1.va.gov/valu_lm.] ■

Diversity@Work

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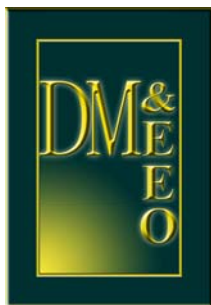
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portal](http://www.va.gov/ofcadmin/portal)

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Resolution Management
www.va.gov/orm

VA's Office of Human
Resources Management
and Labor Relations
www.va.gov/ohrm

DM&EEO ONLINE



The mission of DM&EEO is to provide leadership in creating and sustaining a diverse workplace free of discrimination at the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. Here's a sampling of online tools available on DM&EEO's new redesigned Web site that can help you promote the employment of veterans, women, minorities, and people with disabilities:

- ▶ Asian Pacific American Heritage Month Resources
- ▶ Information on Conferences and Conventions
- ▶ Professional and Community Organization Links

2005 DIVERSITY CALENDAR

MAY

Asian Pacific American Heritage Month

Rolling Thunder Ride for Freedom XVIII

May 27-30

Washington, DC

www.rollingthunder1.com/rt-run-2005-info.htm

Memorial Day

May 31

Federal Asian Pacific American Council (FAPAC) 20th Annual National Leadership Training Conference and Congressional Seminar

May 31-June 3

Arlington, VA

www.fapac.org/confinfo/index.htm

JUNE

Flag Day

June 14

www.flagday.org

Rehabilitation Engineering and Assistive Technology Society of North America 2005 Conference

June 25-27

Atlanta, GA

www.resna.org

League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) National Convention

June 27-July 2

Little Rock, AZ

www.lulac.org/events/convent.html



National Veterans Wheelchair Games

June 27-July 1

Minneapolis, MN

[www1.va.gov/vetevent/nvwg/2005/
Default.cfm](http://www1.va.gov/vetevent/nvwg/2005/Default.cfm)

International Conference on Rehabilitation Robotics

June 28-July 1

Chicago, IL

[www.smpp.northwestern.edu/
ICORR2005/index.htm](http://www.smpp.northwestern.edu/ICORR2005/index.htm)

Looking Ahead:

JULY

Independence Day

July 4

Federally Employed Women (FEW) National Training Program

July 18-22

Reno, NV

www.few.org/calendarofevents.htm

*For more events,
visit www.va.gov/dmeeo
and select the Calendar link.*
